



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BOOK REVIEWS

A NEW DICTIONARY OF RELIGIONS¹

In a period of pioneering when there is no accepted standard by which to evaluate a dictionary of religions, what is the task of the reviewer? The temptation in the present instance is to express sincere appreciation of the courage, breadth of sympathy, and capacity for toil evidenced in the production of an encyclopedia single-handed; to give thanks for the collocation of scattered materials into a handy reference volume and to hope that such efforts will lead at last to an adequate dictionary. But there is also the more serious way of collaborating with the author, taking the place of the general reader or student of comparative religion to whom the volume is directed and so attempting to test the work in the light of its use.

Since to see clearly what we need is perhaps the first step toward securing it we may ask, What ought a Dictionary of Religions to furnish its readers?

1. It ought to deal with all the topics and terms which are significant in the religions of the world. Needless to say there is no such volume yet available. The present work does furnish hundreds of terms nowhere else accessible to the general reader. But if one is happy in the possession of this new wealth he is at once saddened by the omissions. To take the letter *M* as an example; surely some reader might want to look up Mars, materialism, Mecca, medicine man, Mencius, Mennonites, Mercury, metamorphosis, Minerva, Modernism, Moksha, monasticism, monotheism, mythology. All are missing and many more.

2. It ought to give a concise statement of the meaning of the topic or term in the light of the best scholarship. This demand is not satisfied by presenting, in quotation, the opinion of a single author as the writer does so often. The collection of such data is the beginning. When it is digested, valued and presented in a clear statement we have a dictionary definition. In the Semitic field the author frequently achieves this result.

3. Where topics have a variety of meanings in various religions it should indicate the particular meaning in each field. The work, as a

¹ *An Encyclopedia of Religions*. By Maurice A. Canney. London: Routledge & Sons; New York: Dutton, 1921. ix+397 pages. \$10.00.

whole, is weak in this respect. "Salvation," for instance, is not treated at all and "baptism" only from the Christian standpoint.

4. Where a term has changed in meaning through the centuries it should give a statement of the development. This is perhaps the weakest phase of the present work. When a student refers to "Yahweh" it is valuable to have presented an explanation of the Tetragrammaton and guesses at the meaning of the name; but more important, surely, would be to learn of the origin of this idea of God and the story of its transformation in significance through the centuries of Israel's history. Such a genetic treatment would have prevented Avalokitesvara from appearing twice with different definitions under different spellings.

5. Where a term has several meanings it should give them all. A student turning to his book to learn more about the Jewish courts would be surprised, probably, to find "Sanhedrin" defined as a section of the Mishnah; or, seeking information regarding the Japanese sacred literature, to find that "Kojiki" was a Buddhist god.

6. Where terms are common to the whole thought-world of a people it should give the general meaning and then the usage in particular groups. The Hindu terms, Karma, Manas, Prana, will illustrate this point. They penetrate the entire philosophic thinking of India and it is not adequate to define each of them as "a term used in Theosophy." This is like defining sin as a term used in the Salvation Army.

7. When sections of religious literature are treated it should give at least some idea of the contents. For the biblical literature this is excellently done. But a student who has heard the Dhammapada mentioned would not learn much about it by finding it defined in his dictionary as a "section of the Buddhist Canon, a kind of hymn book."

Perhaps the balance of a book is a minor matter if the information is sound. Yet there seems to be extravagance in giving the "Canon of the Old Testament" more, and "Swedenborgians" almost as much, space as "Christianity." "Zoroastrianism" gets only about a quarter of a page and the influential Tendai Buddhism four lines. And why should "Balaam's ass" have space equal to that of "Disciples of Christ"?

All this pathetic appeal for what we would like to have in a Dictionary of Religions lessens not at all a genuine gratitude for what Professor Canney has given. His work will find a welcome among reference books and perhaps the desired dictionary is beyond the powers of individual scholarship.

A. EUSTACE HAYDON

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO